

restricting coolant flow when one or more of the monitored voltages decreases from a predetermined voltage range, as required by claims 24-29.

In contrast, Roberts discloses methods of operating a fuel cell in which regulating coolant flow on start-up is based on a cell temperature parameter, rather than one or more monitored voltages. Roberts states that “preferably during start-up, the fuel cell coolant (if present) is not circulated to allow rapid warming of the stack” (Roberts col. 8, lines 35-37) and that “suitable means may be used to detect a cell temperature parameter indicative of operating temperature (e.g., thermocouple) and to signal the end of the starting period” (id. lines 47-50, emphasis added). Detecting a cell temperature parameter indicative of operating temperature is different from monitoring voltages of a set of fuel cells, as required by claims 24-29. Further, restricting coolant flow based on an operating temperature is not at all the same as restricting coolant flow when one or more of the monitored voltages decreases from a predetermined voltage range, as required by claims 24-29. Accordingly, Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Applicants believe the application is currently in condition for allowance, which action is requested.

The initial due date for this response was October 15, 2005, which was a Saturday. Accordingly, because the following day (October 16, 2005) was also a weekend day, Applicants believe that no extension of time is due in connection with this Reply. Please apply any charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

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Serial No. : 09/896,268
Filed : June 29, 2001
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Attorney's Docket No.: 10964-057001 / PP 765

Date: 10/17/05

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Respectfully submitted,



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